

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7316

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJECT: CONTINENTAL SHELF IN THE AEGEAN

1. TODAY I HAD A PRIVATE MEETING WITH JOHN TZOUNIS, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE (ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT). OUR PURPOSE WAS TO HAVE ONE OF OUR PERIODIC, GENERAL DISCUSSIONS. WE TALKED FIRST ABOUT THE SECRETARY'S UNGA SPEECH AND I GAVE TZOUNIS A COPY AND WENT OVER WITH HIM POINT BY POINT THAT PART OF THE TEXT CONCERNING CYPRUS. THERE WAS NOTHING NEW IN THIS PART OF OUR DISCUSSION AND WE HAVE ALREADY REPORTED FULLY AND SEPARATELY THE INITIALLY FAVORABLE PUBLIC AND GOG REACTION TO THIS SPEECH.

2. THE BULK OF OUR DISCUSSION CENTERED THEREAFTER ON GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND PRIMARILY ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITH RESPECT TO THE CONTINENTAL SHELF
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IN THE AEGEAN SEA. TZOUNIS SAID THAT THE GOG HAD

DETECTED RENEWED HARDENING OF TURKISH POSITIONS ON SEVERAL POINTS (CYPRUS AND FIR'S HAVE ALSO BEEN REPORTED PREVIOUSLY) AND THE LATEST EXAMPLE WAS THE BREAKDOWN IN THE GOG-GOT AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE HANDLING OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE.

3. TZOUNIS SAID THAT WHEN FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS AND CAGLAYANGIL HAD MET IN ROME LAST SPRING THEY HAD AGREED THAT PROFESSIONALS FROM THEIR TWO MINISTRIES WOULD MEET, WITH EXPERTS AND ADVISERS, TO DRAFT A COMPROMIS FOR SUBMITTING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE TO THE WORLD COURT. SUBSEQUENTLY, AT THE SUMMIT MEETING IN BRUSSELS, ON MAY 31ST, PRIME MINISTERS CARAMANLIS AND DEMIREL HAD AGREED AND ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE ANNOUNCING THAT ISSUES BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY WOULD BE SETTLED BY MEANS OF PEACEFUL NEGOTIATIONS AND SINGLING OUT THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE FOR JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE WORLD COURT.

4. SINCE THAT TIME THE TWO FOREIGN MINISTRIES HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO IMPLEMENT THEIR RESPECTIVE UNDERSTANDINGS OF THIS PROPOSAL. FINALLY, IT WAS AGREED IN RECENT DAYS THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WOULD GO TO PARIS TO MEET SEPTEMBER 25-27 ON THIS SUBJECT. TZOUNIS WAS TO REPRESENT THE GOG AND HE HAD BEEN PREPARED TO DEPART FOR PARIS TODAY. THE MEETINGS HAVE NOW BEEN POSTPONED, HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF FAILURE BY THE TWO SIDES TO REACH AGREEMENT ON THE PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING THIS MEETING.

5. ACCORDING TO TZOUNIS, THE DISAGREEMENT IS NOT MERELY SEMANTIC BUT SUBSTANTIVE. THE GOG HAS WANTED THIS MEETING TO DEAL SOLELY WITH THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE AND THE COMPROMIS TO BE JOINTLY SUBMITTED TO THE WORLD COURT. TZOUNIS SAID THAT THE MAY 31 COMMUNIQUE BY THE PRIME MINISTERS WAS QUITE EXPLICIT ON HOW THE CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE WOULD BE HANDLED. HOWEVER, THE GOT HAS BEEN INSISTING THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE PARIS MEETING BE FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING WHETHER OR NOT THE DISPUTE SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE WORLD COURT AND ALSO TO DISCUSS OTHER PROBLEMS AFFECTING GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS. AMONG OTHER THINGS THE TURKISH SIDE WANTS TO DISCUSS WITH THE GREEKS POSSIBLE JOINT VENTURES FOR EXPLORING AND DEVELOPING THE CONTINENTAL SHELF WHICH MIGHT MAKE THE SUBMISSION OF THE DISPUTE TO

THE WORLD COURT UNNECESSARY. TZOUNIS SAID THAT CARAMANLIS HAD INSISTED AND WAS STILL INSISTING THAT THE DISPUTE FIRST BE SUBMITTED TO THE WORLD COURT--WHICH WOULD TEND TO DRAIN MUCH OF THE IMMEDIATE POISON OUT OF THE PROBLEM--AND ONCE IT WAS SUBMITTED GREEK REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH TURKS CONCERNING JOINT VENTURES AND A RANGE OF OTHER POSSIBILITIES AND PROBLEMS. SINCE THE TWO SIDES COULD NOT AGREE ON WHAT WOULD BE DISCUSSED IN PARIS, OR EVEN ON THE TEXT OF A PRESS RELEASE ANNOUNCING THAT THEY WOULD BE MEETING, THE SEPTEMBER 25-27 MEETINGS IN PARIS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED.

6. I ASKED TZOUNIS IF THIS MEANT THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS HAD COMPLETELY BROKEN DOWN OR WHETHER MEETINGS WOULD BE RESCHEDULED SOON. TZOUNIS SAID THAT HE DID NOT KNOW, THAT HE HOPED IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RESCHEDULE THE MEETINGS, AND THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO KEEP US INFORMED. HE SAID HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT THE DISCUSSIONS COULD BE RESCHEDULED SOME TIME AFTER OCTOBER 12TH, INDICATING THAT THE TURKS WERE VERY NERVOUS ABOUT ISSUING ANY STATEMENTS DURING THIS HOMESTRETCH OF THEIR PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD.

7. I HAVE ALSO BEEN IN TOUCH TODAY WITH DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF WHO HAS INDEPENDENTLY BRIEFED ME AND CONFIRMED THE ESSENCE OF THE FOREGOING.
KUBISCH

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